

The INTERCHANGE

Monthly Newsletter for State Employees Prepared by State Employees



Governor Frank O'Bannon, 1930 - 2003

Governor Frank O'Bannon died Saturday, September 13, 2003 at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, five days after suffering a stroke. The two-term governor, who was born January 30, 1930, was 73.

O'Bannon, elected November 5, 1996, and November 7, 2000, performed with energy, vision, creativity and compassion.

O'Bannon was a tenacious consensus-builder who quietly pressed others to do the right thing for the people of Indiana. His strongest belief about public service, expressed frequently in both public statements and in meetings with his immediate staff, was that elected leaders from both political parties should set aside their differences to work together for the betterment of Indiana.

He was a good listener who sought the counsel of others, but never shied from making a decision. He was a gentle and humble man whose windowsill behind his desk bore more pictures of family than of fellow politicians. He firmly believed in open government and the freedom of the press.

His optimism and enthusiasm for all things Hoosier never wavered, even under the most trying circumstance of his tenure – the national recession that has pummeled Indiana's economy for three years. He devoutly believed that his native Indiana was a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family and he regularly exhorted others to spread the word.

His greatest achievements are testament to those beliefs. O'Bannon, a Democrat, teamed with Republican Suellen Reed, the superintendent of public instruction, to induce the strangest of political bedfellows to join them on the Education Roundtable, which then tackled the most intractable problems facing public schools. The result is that Indiana children are learning more and Hoosier schools are improving under some of the toughest academic standards in the country and an accountability system to ensure that they are followed. And the cooperation that was born of the Education Roundtable has spread to other policy discussions, laying a foundation to forever make Indiana a better state.

In 2002, O'Bannon employed his trademark quiet but persistent leadership to persuade lawmakers from both political parties to restructure the state's tax system, making it more conducive to job creation, and to

extend \$1 billion in property tax relief to homeowners, mitigating the effects of a court-ordered reassessment that shifted a significant portion of the tax burden from businesses to homeowners.

Earlier this year, he built on the momentum created by tax restructuring and persuaded lawmakers to pass Energize Indiana, the boldest economic development plan ever undertaken in Indiana. Energize Indiana offers an array of incentives, assistance and tax breaks to high-tech businesses, as well as skill assessments and job matching for workers. Its goal was to take advantage of Indiana's promise in four high-tech economic sectors: the life sciences, advanced manufacturing, information technology and 21st century logistics, or high-tech distribution.

In both the 2002 and 2003 legislative sessions, O'Bannon addressed a serious budget deficit but maintained that doing that, and nothing else, did not adequately serve the people of Indiana. And so, unlike any other governor in the nation, the unassuming Hoosier leader simultaneously addressed issues of the moment *and* those of the future – and fundamentally changed the

Indiana economy forever.

Of all his many accomplishments, two others also stood out to O'Bannon: creation of the Community College system, which provided a higher education alternative for Hoosiers for whom a four-year college was not a good fit, and movement of people with developmental disabilities from state institutions to less-restrictive community settings.

Also during the O'Bannon years, nearly half a million children without health insurance received health care through Hoosier Healthwise and thousands of miles of state highways and local roads were built or repaired.

O'Bannon had just 16 months left in his second term, but he shunned the very notion of "lame duck" and had already directed his staff to begin work on his next major project. He fervently wished to return to a subject particularly dear to him – early childhood education. He hoped that, even Governor O'Bannon with budgetary constraints, state government could play a larger role in encouraging new Hoosier parents to stimulate learning in their very young children.

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"I've Lost My Governor and My Friend"

-Governor Joe Kernan

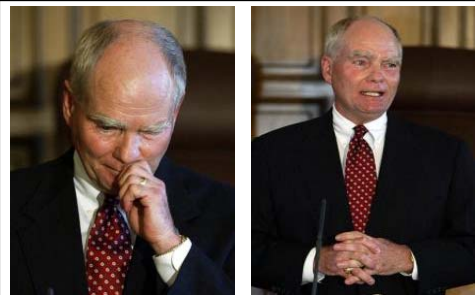
The following is the text of Governor Joseph E. Kernan's remarks after being sworn in as the 48th governor of Indiana on Saturday, September 13, 2003 in the Supreme Court chambers at the Statehouse in Indianapolis:

"In 1990, I had the opportunity to be with an extraordinary man and woman on a trade mission to eastern Europe. It was Judy and Lieutenant Governor Frank O'Bannon. And I came away from that experience understanding the sincerity, the compassion, the passion, the commitment to service of those two wonderful people. And we became friends.

In 1996, knowing of my reservations to run for lieutenant governor with him, when Frank O'Bannon asked me to run, I accepted without hesitation because of my trust, my respect and my belief in him and all that he stood for.



Joe Kernan is sworn in as Indiana's 48th Governor while his wife, Maggie Kernan, holds the bible.



Governor Joe Kernan is emotional as he addresses the audience after being sworn in on September 13.

Today, without reservation, Maggie and I accept these new responsibilities that we have with humility, understanding of the challenges that lie ahead, but also with resolve - understanding that as we work together, going forward from here, in the ideals that Frank O'Bannon taught us in his lifetime, that we can do well, that we can do the best for Hoosiers.

I've lost my governor and my friend. So too has every Hoosier lost their governor and their friend.

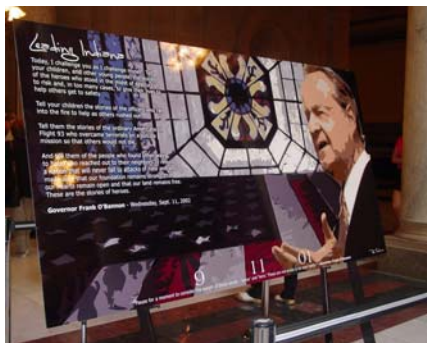
Tomorrow, Sunday, I would ask that all over the state of Indiana we have a day of remembrance, a day of reflection, sorrow and joy for a life that was lived to the fullest in the service of the people of the state of Indiana so that every Hoosier could live their lives to the fullest.

Thank you all for being with us this afternoon."

Hoosiers Paid Tribute to Frank O'Bannon on Thursday, September 18, 2003



Judy O'Bannon touches a photo of her late husband that was on display at the Statehouse on Thursday, September 18.



"Leading Indiana", an artistic rendering of O'Bannon by Rob Theodorow.

On September 18, 2003, hoosiers paid tribute to the late Governor Frank O'Bannon, viewing memorial displays at the Statehouse that spoke as much about the man as they did the politician.

In keeping with the late Governor's vision for providing children with educational opportunities, O'Bannon's family asked Hoosiers to donate school supplies in lieu of flowers.

Visitors could view photographs of O'Bannon, peek into the governor's office, and leave messages of support for his family or write anecdotes about him in black, hard-bound memory books kept on tables across from the governor's office. The 40 bound albums will be given to O'Bannon's family.

Also on display was a large artistic rendering of O'Bannon by Rob Theodorow called "Leading Indiana." It features part of a speech the governor gave September 11, 2002, the first anniversary of the U.S. terrorist attacks, as well as the inside of the Capitol dome and an American flag.

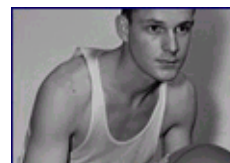
O'Bannon's official portrait also was on display. It will be hung Friday in the receiving room of the governor's office.



Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson writes a message in one of the 40 memory books that will later be given to the late governor's family.



Hoosiers donated school supplies in lieu of flowers.



Indeed, children, their education and their well-being were O'Bannon's passion. He sparkled when a young constituent sought to shake his hand or pose for a picture with him. He was passionate about giving children every opportunity to succeed in life, from their very earliest moments through higher education.

O'Bannon's love and concern for children were reflected in his two inaugurations, which made history for very different reasons. After his 1996 election, he invited Indiana's fourth-grade students – who study Indiana history – to witness his January 13, 1997, inauguration, something no governor had ever done. Despite sub-zero temperatures that day, hundreds of Hoosier school children, for the first time ever, watched as their governor was sworn in at a ceremony on the west side of the Statehouse.

After his reelection, the governor repeated his invitation to a new crop of fourth-grade history students. Recalling how daunting Indiana weather can be, organizers moved the inaugural festivities inside the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. More than 25,000 students and visitors from across Indiana watched as the first governor of the 21st century was sworn in January 8, 2001, making it the largest gubernatorial inauguration crowd in Indiana history.

Hoosiers who had the privilege of personally meeting O'Bannon can attest that he was warm and friendly, especially when a young constituent sought to shake his hand or pose for a picture with him. That persona was not put on; he was equally kind to political allies and foes; to his staff; and to members of the news media. He rarely lost his temper and often sought to be a conciliator.

It is said that eyes are the windows to one's soul. That was certainly true with O'Bannon. When he was particularly delighted, his eyes positively twinkled. When he was learning about an issue, he watched the speaker with a thoughtful gaze, listening intently, taking in every detail. And in those rare moments of pique, his eyes flashed with fire.

O'Bannon unabashedly exhibited a whimsical side, delighting in shooting photographs with a credit card-sized digital camera at some news events, including the U.S. Midwest-Japan Association conference he was attending when he was stricken and the recent State Fair balloon race.

In fact, the governor was a gadget and computer aficionado. He had a computer on his desk and at home and used the Internet and e-mail long before it became routine. He also was an avid reader, favoring non-fiction, particularly political history, foreign affairs and natural his-

tory. And he loved to bird watch and hike on his property in Harrison County, at Eagle Creek and Fort Benjamin Harrison state parks; and elsewhere.

O'Bannon was long in the public eye – nearly seven years as governor, eight as lieutenant governor (1989 to 1996, under Governor Evan Bayh) and 18 years as a state senator from Corydon, representing all or part of eight Southern Indiana counties. He spent two years as Senate Finance chairman and 11 years as Democratic floor leader.

But his personal life was enormously important to O'Bannon as well. There were few things he loved more than spending time with his family in his rebuilt log barn in his native Harrison County.

O'Bannon, who was graduated from Corydon High School in 1948, received a bachelor's degree in government from Indiana University in 1952. He served two years in the U.S. Air Force and then returned to Bloomington to earn a law degree from IU in 1957.

That same year, he married Judy Asmus, whom he met on a blind date in college.

After he received his law degree, O'Bannon returned to Corydon with his bride, where he started a law practice. It was slow at first, so he spent time at the family-owned newspaper, The Corydon Democrat, doing a little bit of everything – shooting pictures, covering general news, writing sports stories and stuffing the paper's sections together. O'Bannon wrote the newspaper's editorial about President Kennedy's assassination.

Until his death, he served as chairman of the O'Bannon Publishing Co., which publishes weekly newspapers in Harrison and Crawford counties.

When O'Bannon was lieutenant governor, he and Mrs. O'Bannon purchased a home on the Old Northside of Indianapolis. After his election as governor, they lived in the governor's residence on North Meridian Street in Indianapolis but moved to the Harrison House on the grounds of the former Fort Benjamin Harrison while the governor's residence is made accessible to people with disabilities. The O'Bannons have three children – Polly, Jennifer and Jonathan – and five grandchildren – Beau, Chelsea,

Asher, Demi and Elle.

Expressions of memorial can be made in Governor O'Bannon's name to:

O'Bannon Foundation
C/o Union Federal Bank
45 N. Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204



Over 5000 Hoosiers Attended O'Bannon's Indianapolis Memorial Service

The following was written on the back of the program handed out at Governor O'Bannon's Indianapolis Memorial Service, held on the west steps of the State House. The late Governor's memorial service was held in the same place he was inaugurated in 1997. Over 5,000 lawmakers, dignitaries, Statehouse workers and Indiana residents attended the Indianapolis Service on Friday, September 19, 2003.

Frank O'Bannon was not born with a grand ambition to become Governor of the State of Indiana. He was imbued from childhood with a sense of community responsibility that led him to be a part of building up his Harrison County community.

That spirit of reaching out and reaching up could not be bound by county line. He followed his father's footsteps to the Indiana State Senate. And he answered a groundswell call to seek statewide office, not for personal glory, but because he felt he could contribute to the team called the Hoosier community.

His commitment, always, was to faith, community, and family. His faith was personal, but all of Indiana was his community, and his family.

George Bernard Shaw put it best in a passage that O'Bannon lived by, and repeated in his first inaugural speech:

"I am convinced that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as I can before turning it over to future generations."

Governor O'Bannon has turned over that torch. It is now our responsibility to tend to the flame.

May it always burn brightly.



Rep. Julia Carson, Sen. Evan Bayh, and Gov. Joe Kernan sing the Star Spangled Banner with Mel Carraway, Superintendent of State Police.



While the state's business must go on, O'Bannon's legacy will be everlasting, said Senator Evan Bayh, former Indiana Governor.



Tim Joyce, former chief of staff to O'Bannon, read the Lord's Prayer after the Circle City Sound Barbershop Chorus sang "Danny Boy".



Gov. Kernan collects himself after his remarks at the Indianapolis service. Kernan said, "While he was our leader, he was still just one of us."



Former first lady Judy O'Bannon turned to the thousands of attendees, pulled out the digital camera, and took a picture.



Mrs. O'Bannon lightened the mood when she took a picture of the crowd with the late Governor's digital camera. For that instant, the tears turned to smiles.



Four F-16 fighter jets flew overhead; one broke off and disappeared into the clouds, while the three others flew in missing-man formation.

O'Bannon's Portrait Now on Display in Governor's Office Receiving Room



O'Bannon's official portrait.

The Late Governor Frank O'Bannon's official gubernatorial portrait, painted by Michael Chelich of Hammond, Indiana, and mementos of his office were on display Thursday, September 18, 2003 in the Statehouse rotunda. Visitors were able to see O'Bannon's official portrait, which was hung Friday, September 19th in the receiving room of the governor's office. The portrait joined those of governors who have served since 1961, including Democrats Evan Bayh, Roger Branigin and Matthew Welsh and Republicans Robert Orr, Otis Bowen and Edgar Whitcomb.

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Visitors viewing O'Bannon's portrait.